

# Hazardous Materials Bulletin

## REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE

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Regulated medical waste became a hazardous material for transportation under docket HM-181G. Currently, there are five federal agencies that regulating infectious substances and medical waste in some fashion. This document will only examine the regulations found in 49 CFR.

"Regulated medical waste," UN3291 is a proper shipping name for domestic transportation, although it is classified as a 6.2 material (infectious substance). This sometimes leads to confusion, since "regulated medical waste" is a general term that refers to many materials, while most proper shipping names identify one specific product.

The definition of regulated medical waste is found in §173.134(a)(5) as follows:

*A regulated medical waste means a waste or reusable material, other than a culture or stock of an infectious substance, in risk group 2 or 3 and generated in:*

- (i) The diagnosis, treatment or immunization of human beings or animals;*
- (ii) Research pertaining to the diagnosis, treatment or immunization of human beings or animals; or*
- (iii) The production or testing of biological products.*

*Regulated medical waste containing an infectious substance in Risk Group 4 must be classed as a division 6.2, described as an infectious substance, and assigned to UN2814 or UN2900, as appropriate.*

The terms *infectious substance*, *diagnostic specimen*, and *biological products, cultures and stocks, risk group, sharps, toxin and used health care product* are also defined in §173.134(a), while §173.134(b) provides exceptions for diagnostic specimens and biological products. It should also be noted that while most Division 6.2 materials do not have packing groups, regulated medical waste is assigned to packing group II.

Shipments of regulated medical waste require shipping papers and package markings (See Part 173, Subparts A, D, and E). Labels are generally required, however, under §173.134(b)(3)(i), packages transported by private or contract carrier do not have to be labeled if it is marked with the OSHA "Biohazard" marking (29 CFR §1910.1030). Vehicles transporting division 6.2 materials are not required to display placards (see §172.500a).

Regulated medical waste must normally be in a container that meets the requirements of §173.197. An exception, however, in §173.134(b)(3)(ii), allows a non-specification package for regulated medical wastes (other than a waste culture or stock of infectious substance) if the package meets the general requirements found in §173.24 and §173.24(a), is rigid, and meets the OSHA package requirements of 29 CFR §1910.1030.

Under §173.197, regulated medical waste must be packaged in packagings conforming to the packing group II performance level. Additionally, they must be rigid; leak resistant; impervious to moisture; of sufficient strength to prevent tearing or bursting under normal conditions of use and handling; sealed to prevent leakage during transport; puncture resistant for sharps and sharps with residual fluids

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